IMPROVING PERFORMANCE WITH PROGRAM EVALUATION

Evaluation Support Division

Your Evaluation Resource

Summer 2003

Visit us at:

http://intranet.epa.gov/evaluate
http://www.epa.gov/evaluate

The Evaluation Support Division (ESD) supports the Agency's mission to promote innovation and system change and advocates program evaluation capacity throughout the Agency.

Improving EPA's Performance with Program Evaluation

Program Evaluation

Program Evaluation is a systematic way to assess how well a program is working. A practical and efficient program evaluation not only looks at results, but also identifies ways to improve the program.

Perform Program Evaluation to:

✓ Ensure program goals & objectives are being met.
✓ Determine allocated resources are yielding the greatest environmental benefit.
✓ Identify what works well, what does not, and why.
✓ Identify program areas that need improvement.
✓ Inform management decisions regarding the program.
✓ Inform environmental guidance & develop future policy related to a specific project, program or issue.
✓ Communicate a program's value.
✓ Comply with Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA).

Program Evaluation Drivers

Government Performance Results Act (GPRA)
Requires EPA to report progress towards achieving our strategic & annual goals, and schedules & summaries of past and future program evaluations with increased emphasis on results-based outcome oriented goals & measures.

President's Management Agenda --Identifies five areas for improving the management and performance of the federal government using a scorecard to rate federal agencies on each initiative using a "score" of red, yellow, or green.

OMB's Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART)
Used to assess & evaluate programs across government, and emphasizes use of "independent & quality evaluations" to determine if programs are effective & achieving results.

EPA's Innovation Strategy supports evaluation as a critical tool in the "innovation cycle" to mainstream innovation.

Program Evaluation Support

The Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation's (OPEI) Evaluation Support Division (ESD) evaluates select innovative programs and projects and enables its partners in core programs to more effectively conduct program evaluations and analyses that inform management decisions, enhance organizational learning, promote innovations, and foster better environmental results. ESD provides a number of services including:

♦ Evaluation products, tools and educational resources.

♦ Consultation and technical assistance to help programs evaluate innovative and core activities.

♦ Advice and assistance in acquiring contract vehicles for evaluation.

♦ An annual Program Evaluation Competition, for program offices and regions to receive financial support and contractor assistance to conduct their own evaluations (co-sponsored with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO)).

♦ The Program Evaluation Network, a forum that allows Agency staff to establish collaborative relationships and to discuss evaluation concepts and strategies (co-sponsored with OCFO).

Program Evaluation Network (PEN)

The PEN, co-sponsored by OPEI and OCFO, supports internal capacity to conduct program evaluations by providing a forum for EPA staff to:

♦ Develop and enhance evaluation skills through program evaluation training.
♦ Discuss topic-specific sessions of interest on environmental program evaluation.
♦ Discuss the latest program evaluation activities throughout the Agency.

Participants in the PEN meet quarterly and include staff from Regional Offices and all major Agency Programs.

Products and Tools

Program Evaluation Fact Sheets
Document the approach, results and outcome of selected evaluations throughout the Agency.

Evaluation Worksheet
Provides basic guidelines for planning an evaluation.

Program Evaluation Contracts Checklist
Helps evaluators identify key contractual issues.

Evaluation Modules
Five modules that serve as a practitioner's tool to facilitate the process of capturing, identifying and examining the broader potential of innovative tools and approaches.

Resources

ESD Staff
Provide limited advisory, consultation, and training services.

ESD Website
Provides a gateway to evaluation products, tools, resources and other information related to program evaluation. (http://intranet.epa.gov/evaluate)

Program Evaluation Competition
Provides financial and contract support for Headquarters and Regional Programs to conduct program evaluations.

Program Evaluation Network
Forum for EPA staff to exchange information related to evaluation.

For more information on ESD or the PEN, please contact:

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Or visit us on the web at:
http://intranet.epa.gov/evaluate